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SUBJECT: WINNERS AND LOSERS FROM DOHA AND NEXT STEPS FOR
THE DARFUR PEACE PROCESS

REF: A. DOHA 133
[1](#)B. DOHA 123
[1](#)C. DOHA 118
[1](#)D. DOHA 106
[1](#)E. SECSTATE 14421
[1](#)F. KHARTOUM 150

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Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Although the Doha process continues, the conclusion of the initial phase of the process on February 17 with an "Agreement of Good Will and Confidence Building" between JEM and the GoS (reftel a-d) left behind notable early losers and winners. Rapidly changing events in Sudan, and in expected follow-up negotiating rounds, will make this a short-lived victory for some and a chance to regain their position for others. For now, JEM, President Bashir's NCP, Chief Mediator Bassole, and Qatar came out on top, while Minni Minnawi, Egypt, Libya, Chad, the Fur people, and the Chadian Rebels appear to have fallen behind. The verdict is still out on the U.S., the SPLM, and Abdul Wahid Al-Nur. Given that some parties inevitably view this round of negotiations in terms of victory and defeat, Post offers ten suggestions on the next steps for the peace process. END
SUMMARY

WINNERS
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[1](#)2. (C) JEM: JEM leaves Doha with a short-term political victory, and an even greater international profile. Khalil Ibrahim and JEM's leadership commanded an international stage with free coverage from Al-Jazeera and the international print media. Wearing fatigues, combat boots, and a battle scarf, Khalil Ibrahim portrayed himself as a guerrilla freedom fighter, contrasted to the elitist, suit-wearing NCP delegates. By being the first to sign the Declaration of Intent, JEM has taken a step towards its concept of a "JEM-led alliance" (a clause that was discussed during the negotiations but ultimately removed from its final language) for Darfur which barely disguises the movement's thirst for supremacy in the region. JEM was able to push (and keep) its main demand of a prisoner release (which really benefits only JEM) front and center.

[1](#)3. (C) NCP: Doha gave and continues to give major political cover to Khartoum's friends in the African Union and the Arab League to seek an ICC Article 16 deferral. Through its engagement with the Chief Mediator, Qataris, JEM, and the international observers, the NCP portrayed itself as serious, responsible, and committed to peace. Through

meeting with Khalil Ibrahim, the NCP has also moved toward reconciling the Islamist ranks in Sudan. The vague "Agreement of Good Will and Confidence Building for the Settlement of the Problem in Darfur" will also allow the NCP to try to play its usual game of avoiding real and binding agreements, and focusing on process over substance. Although the NCP agreed to sit with a foe that almost succeeded in taking Omdurman by force in May 2008, the GOS does not interpret direct negotiations with Khalil Ibrahim as a loss of face. Upon his return to Khartoum, hardliner Nafie Ali Nafie was greeted with cheers at the airport, immediately held a press conference, and was lauded as a peacemaker. Since the February 17 agreement, almost all GoS officials and the Sudanese state media apparatus have on a daily, and almost hourly, basis trumpeted the agreement.

¶4. (C) BASSOLE: Whatever happens next, Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole has now accomplished more than past AU and UN mediators Salim Ahmed Salim and Jan Eliasson ever did. Bassole's courtship of Ibrahim succeeded and brought one of the major rebel movements to the table - a movement that refused to participate in the last major negotiations in 2007 and tried to sabotage the 2006 Abuja talks. Bassole's quiet, behind-the-scenes style, in conjunction with the pressure of the ICC, worked in bringing both JEM and the GOS together. The next major challenge for Bassole will be whether he can bring other rebel movements to the table, especially as JEM's rivals feel snubbed by his close courtship of JEM, and whether he can make something more tangible out of a goodwill agreement.

¶5. (C) NAFIE: Presidential Assistant and regime hardliner Nafie Ali Nafie displayed in Doha that he can negotiate and close a deal. He was serious and businesslike even earning kudos from the SPLM's Yasser Arman (septel).

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Nafie also proved that he is still in control of the Darfur file after other GOS officials (namely Vice President Ali Osman Taha) appeared to be encroaching on Nafie's territory in the fall of 2008. This initial success also strengthens Nafie temporarily in the NCP's constant internal struggles for power which seeks to identify a successor for Bashir should the President stumble. Taha is still in the ascendance though - for now.

¶6. (C) QATAR: After controversial, highly publicized initiatives on Gaza and Lebanon, Qatar proved that it can also influence events in Africa. The February 17 agreement also discredits naysayers, including the suspicious Egyptians and Libyans (both of whom feel they have their own interests in Sudan). Critics initially accused Qatar of undermining Chief Mediator Bassole, but Qatar repeatedly acknowledged the leading role of Bassole and both parties appeared to work together throughout the process. Naysayers stated that Qatar was naive and lacked sufficient knowledge about Darfur, but several visits and months of study provided enough of a crash course for State Minister Mahmoud and other GoQ officials. Critics also accused Qatar of tying an Article 16 resolution to the peace process - another claim that has, thus far, gone unfounded.

LOSERS

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¶7. (C) MINNI MINNAWI: Doha drives another nail into the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement. JEM's January 2009 sneak attack on Minnawi's strongholds and the subsequent loss of these areas to the GoS has significantly weakened (if not altogether "decimated" as some UNAMID observers have claimed) Minnawi's forces. Minnawi's state of limbo (as both a marginalized GoS official and rebel leader) grows even more awkward. Minni and SLA/Unity appear to be driven together from their mutual animosity to the GOS and JEM (especially following Ibrahim's suggestion that JEM could "guarantee" security in Darfur if there is a cessation of hostilities)

and could still morph into major spoilers supported by Libya and Chad. Indeed, that is what happened to Minnawi after he signed the DPA and was considered the strongest rebel movement at the time. An ineffective peace steadily fragmented his forces. The major question of how Minni Minnawi becomes involved in the process without losing more remains unanswered.

¶8. (C) EGYPT/LIBYA: Qatar upstaged both Libya and Egypt as it promoted reconciliation between two Sudanese Islamist factions (NCP and JEM.) Egypt disapproves of Qatar's role in reaching out to GOE foes (Hamas, Hizballah, and Iran,) rather than bowing to Egyptian foreign policy. Many observers interpreted Egypt's hosting of JEM and Minni Minnawi before and after Doha as an overt attempt to undermine the Doha process. Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit's fear of the "great state of Qatar" grows, (as he expressed in his meeting with Secretary Clinton, reftel e). Libya, meanwhile, appears less offended by Qatar's current role but has its own interests in Darfur. However, once the glow of Muammar al-Qadhafi's election as AU Chairman wears off, Libya may re-engage with the peace process and renew its ties with Darfur's armed rebel actors. The danger is that Libya could renew support to other Zaghawa rebels it is already suspected/assumed to support SLA/U) and if this support is extended to Minni Minnawi, we could see an upsurge in fighting later this year as these excluded Zaghawa warlords seek to return to prominence.

¶9. (C) CHAD: Although Chad formally welcomed the Doha agreement, the Government of Chad should fear losing its proxy force to the Sudanese. Deby has strengthened his military, but without JEM, the GOC may struggle to defend itself against the an upcoming attack by Chadian rebels, and employ an alternate group to do the regime's dirty work. Without real Chadian-Sudanese reconciliation, a Doha agreement is a net loss for the Chadian Government, giving it one less card to use against its aggressive, hostile neighbor.

¶10. (C) FUR: Once again, the Fur tribe witnesses an aggressive Zaghawa Movement monopolizing the limelight and international political support. IDPs, the vast majority of which are Fur, wait on the sidelines while their obstinate and self-proclaimed leader Abdul Wahid Al-Nur pontificates from Paris. While most thoughtful observers acknowledge that there can be no real peace in Darfur without the Fur, there

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remains a political vacuum while Abdul Wahid pouts in Paris. Some Fur leaders will perhaps be pressed to urgently look for alternatives to Abdul Wahid's remote control leadership.

¶11. (C) CHADIAN REBELS: Any de-escalation in the conflict between the GOC and the GOS jeopardizes the Chadian rebels support from the GOS forcing them to chose between irrelevance deep inside Sudan or battle inside Chad at a time not of their own choosing.

UNKNOWN

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¶12. (C) U.S.: Has the U.S. tied its political goals in Darfur to the agenda of the Chief Mediator working with two Sudanese Islamists? How deep should the U.S. wade into the murky waters of Doha, when the very process offends the primary population of concern for the U.S.(i.e. Darfur's refugees and IDPs, and not its rival rebel leaders)? What happens if Khartoum decides to rule Darfur through a willing and brutal Khalil who has signed an internationally supported agreement? How much pressure, leverage, and political capital should the U.S. expend to influence Egypt and Libya, SLA/Unity, SLA/AW, Minnawi, and France with respect to what is a promising but clearly flawed peace process?

¶13. (C) SPLM: Given Khalil Ibrahim's public statements on the CPA and private positions in Doha, it is unclear

whether JEM is committed to the CPA and especially the South's 2011 referendum for secession. SPLM members present in Doha (septel) were heartened by Doha giving primacy to the political process but very worried about the totalitarian instincts of both Khalil and the NCP. They are also concerned that even a partially successful agreement on Darfur will strengthen the NCP's hold on power in Sudan and ability to eventually move against the South by 2011.

¶14. (C) ABDUL WAHID AL-NUR: Al-Nur's critique of Doha as a deal intended to release PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi and Khalil Ibrahim's half-brother Abd Al-Aziz Osher has an element of truth to it. The wait-and-see Al-Nur may prove right as the impending ICC indictment may nullify this round of talks. Nonetheless, Al-Nur seems to have lost the battle over the media, as both JEM and the GOS come across as engaged, constructive, and in charge of Darfur. If this process fails, as have so many others, the stubborn and obnoxious Abdul Wahid will once again look to be prophetic in his skepticism.

THE ICC FACTOR

¶15. (C) An ICC indictment may soon make JEM and the GOS's handshake in Doha irrelevant, and in that case, the only winners from Qatar would be the NCP and Abdul Wahid Al-Nur. The NCP will frame the ICC as undermining the peace process, victimizing a government with good intentions, and renewing the conflict in Darfur. Using the ICC arrest warrant as evidence, Abdul Wahid Al-Nur could potentially grow in stature as he, once again, refused to negotiate with the devil.

NEXT STEPS

¶16. (C) The next phase in the peace process will require even more attention, support, and sensitive engagement from the international community. The following points constitute some of Post's recommendations:

- FOCUS ON SLM/UNITY: Having courted JEM and upset rival movements, Bassole should try to immediately bring SLM/Unity into the process. Members of Bassole's Joint Mediation Support Team have repeatedly told U.S. officials prior to the negotiations that they believe that SLM/Unity is eager to engage in the peace process and would follow any agreement signed by SLA/AW or JEM. Now is the time for the Chief Mediator and his team to test their theory. Post recommends Bassole's immediate outreach to SLM/Unity, especially as senior representatives from this rebel movement (such as Suliman Jamous) have already expressed their great dissatisfaction with "the DPA part II." Bassole must move quickly to dispel these beliefs. JEM should not be allowed to oppose this or dictate the process.

- FIND A POSITION FOR MINNI MINNAWI: Even though he may be militarily and politically weakened, Minni Minnawi

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could rally his former SLM allies, quickly regain his status, and play a destabilizing role in negotiations. His very indeterminate status, as a symbol of the GoS's broken promises, does little to assuage rebel concerns, and a step forward for SLM/MM would indicate a step forward for the region as a whole. It is not enough for Bassole or the international community to tell Minnawi that he must choose whether he wants to be a part of the Government or one of the rebels without giving him options. Instead, Bassole should specifically ask what Minnawi wants out of a future peace deal. There should be some sort of graceful exit strategy to avoid him becoming a spoiler. Some of the ideas that could be considered are: 1) Allocating an area of control for SLM/MM forces and reward the area with development money. (Note: This does not need to be in his former strongholds of South Darfur, but could be within the Dar Zaghawa.) 2) Reserving senior military positions for Minnawi his top

commanders. 3) Retaining some senior positions for SLM/MM in the next iteration of the TDRA.

- REINFORCE DOHA AS A VENUE: Although the Libyans and Egyptians will maintain their concerns over the venue of Doha, the Qatari involvement has been positive and, at the very least, more appropriate than Sirte ever was (given Libya's history of meddling in and arming Darfur). Bassole should continue to bring all parties to Doha to strengthen the role of Doha while finding a role (perhaps in Darfuri civil society consultations) for the Libyans and assuaging Egyptian concerns about Qatari machinations.

- LEVERAGE THE AGREEMENT AGAINST JEM AND THE GOS: The reality in Darfur has not yet changed. With ongoing reports of GoS bombing, fighting between the movements and the GoS forces, and inter-rebel clashes, the Doha process has not improved the situation on the ground for the people of Darfur one iota. Unless the "Agreement of Good Will" results in reduced fighting and hostility between JEM and the GOS (and eventually, everyone else), it will be a useless document. The Chief Mediator should leverage the agreement against JEM and the GOS and make both parties accountable for their hostile words and actions in the field. This should include bringing UNAMID into the process (as observers) so that whatever is negotiated can be monitored/verified by UNAMID. The Chief Mediator will need to use the media in this endeavor. Any public criticism Bassole delivers to the GOS and JEM could not only reduce violence within Darfur, but also help change the negative opinion of non-JEM rebel movements towards the Mediation.

- APPLAUD CHAD'S ROLE: Chad should be applauded for publicly acknowledging the progress achieved in Doha and must be continually engaged to try and rein in JEM while also acknowledging their concerns about Khartoum-supported Chadian rebels now led by Deby's relative, Timane Erdimi.

- COURT EGYPT AND LIBYA: The international community and the Chief Mediator must quietly emphasize to Egypt and Libya that they should not spoil the Doha process. The Chief Mediator will likely have to find a symbolic role for Libya, and perhaps one element of the discussions could take place on Libyan soil. Bassole should immediately visit Cairo and Tripoli for discussions with senior GOE and GOL officials.

- PURSUE BILATERAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS: Bassole, working closely with UNAMID and the international community, could pursue bilateral security agreements with each major rebel group linked to a political framework. If security and/or cessation of hostilities arrangements are in place with one or several groups, UNAMID will finally have an agreement to verify, as opposed to just monitoring ongoing violence with no point of reference. (reftel f).

- ENGAGE THE FRENCH AND CHECK THEIR POSITION ON ABDUL WAHID: The international community and Mediation should revisit the GOF's relationship with Abdul Wahid and the leverage the French may have over him.

- BRIDGE THE GAP WITH UNAMID: The turf battles and rivalry between UNAMID and the Mediation is well known and troubling. (For example, on February 19, JSR Adada exclaimed in a large Donor meeting that UNAMID did not have any observers in Doha and that he would like to correct this in the future.) UNAMID's ambitious polchief Abdul Muhammad could cross wires with the Mediation if not closely watched. Therefore, the Chief Mediator should reach out to UNAMID

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(particularly Joint Special Representative Adada and Force Commander Agwai) and use UNAMID's expertise on the technical aspects of a security agreement or cessation of hostilities. UNAMID representatives should soon be invited to Doha for consultations and available GoS and rebel representatives. At the very least, those who would actually monitor a potential

cessation of hostilities need to be in the room.

- CONSULT THE FUR, ARABS, AND DARFUR CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS: As the aggressive and feared Zaghawa tribe dominates the armed rebel movements, the Mediation should immediately focus its efforts on the Fur, Arabs, and other non-Zaghawa tribes in Darfur. These meetings should be framed as symbolic consultations, and not the search for a replacement to the unruly Abdul Wahid Al-Nur. (NOTE: It would be inappropriate for an outside actor from the international community, and not the people of Darfur, to choose the next Fur leader. Although the U.S. can and should encourage alternatives, it can not rush this process or make the selections for the Fur people. Furthermore, at this point in the process it is incongruent for a leader from civil society or the traditional authority to sit alongside armed actors from JEM or any other movement. This outreach should be viewed more in terms of putting pressure on armed actors than anointing the next leader of Darfur. END NOTE.) The Mediation should capitalize on the work already completed by the Darfur Darfur Dialogue and Consultation. The U.S. can support the Mediation in this outreach to the Fur by hosting a visit to Washington from a diverse group of Fur and Arab leaders based in Sudan. Certainly, the U.S. needs to correct the false impression that both the DPA and Doha have created that we favor the Zaghawa over Darfur's other peoples, especially the much larger Fur community and the fractious and heavily-armed Darfuri Arabs.

FERNANDEZ